

HIGHER-SCORING SCRABBLE

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The highest single-move Scrabble scores have utilized the word BENZOXYCAMPHORS, and it seems unlikely much improvement will be made without a new base-word. In the February 1974 Word Ways there appears a 2037-point solution devised by Josefa Heifetz, which uses the term SESQUIOXIDIZING. Unfortunately this word does not appear in any dictionary, and no one has been able to find a substantive citation in another reference. However, the Oxford English Dictionary (OED) lists 'sesquioxidized' as a past participle, which surely implies the existence of a verb 'sesquioxidize'.

I wonder if SESQUIOXIDIZING is really any less plausible than BENZOXYCAMPHORS, which seems to be only an inferred plural of 'benzoxycamphor' in Webster's Second Edition (Web 2). Almost as logical is the higher-scoring BENZOXYCAMPHORY (compare 'camphory'), defined as 'of the nature of benzoxycamphor'. Someday perhaps supportive quotations will be found for these words.

The game below features a 2064-point single move based on the elusive SESQUIOXIDIZING. Starred letters represent blank tiles.

S	E	S	Q	U	I	O	X	I	D	I	Z	I	N	G
J		E	W	T		V	A	C	A	B	O	N*	A	
A			A			E	N		F	E	O		S	
M			V	E	E	R	T		F		S		T	
B	E	T	E			W	H	E	E	P	A	R	R	
O			R			O*	O		D	U	O		O	
K			E			U	P				R		N	
I			D		U	N	H	I	T		A		O	
N						D	Y				N		M	
G							L				G		I	
							L				I		C	
							I			A			A	
							T						L	
							E						L	
													Y	

Moves: 1. hyl 2. phyllite 3. anthophyllite 4. veert 5. ver, va, en 6. he 7. unhit 8. verwound, whe, oo, up, dy 9. wavered 10. ewt 11. ut, ui 12. es, se 13. bete 14. jamb 15. jamboking 16. vacabon 17. affed, whee 18. duo 19. orang 20. ic 21. oosporangia 22. ibe, feo 23. in, in 24. parr 25. tron 26. astronomic 27. astronomically 28. sesquioxidizing (1674), sjamboking (78), qwavered (34), over-

wound (15), xanthophyllite (96), daffed (14), zoosporangia (34), astronomically (69) + 50-point bonus = 2064 points. QWAVERED is the past tense of 'qwaiver', an early form of the verb 'quaver' in the OED; VEERT and VACABON are early OED spellings of 'vert' and 'vacabond'; and UI (an isthmus) appears in the English Dialect Dictionary (EDD).

Some years ago it was reported that an English chemist, Dr. William Tush, had synthesized a colourless, crystalline solid called 5-benzyl-8-hydroxyquinoline. It was said to be insoluble in water, but soluble in hydrochloric acid and in sodium hydroxide solution. By analogy with benzhydrol and diiodohydroxyquin, Dr. Tush decided to give this substance the 'trivial' name BENZHYDROXYQUIN.

Tragically, no one has been able to confirm this momentous discovery; in fact the very existence of the mysterious chemist has been questioned. Severe doubts were raised when a Scrabble contest was entered by a certain Lewis Shilbut, who managed to score 2278 points for a single move, using the word BENZHYDROXYQUIN. A scientific paper by Dr. Tush was cited as proof of the word's legitimacy. However, when it was found that Bill Tush and L. Shilbut have rather a suspicious mutual anagram an inquiry was instigated, which led to the disqualification of this entry. For readers' interest the Shilbut solution is shown below. The letters played in the final move are B, Z, H, R, X, Q, N, and all words, apart from BENZHYDROXYQUIN, can be found in major English dictionaries.

B	E	N	Z	H	Y	D	R	O	X	Y	Q	U	I	N
R		I	O	A		R	E	S	A	I	V	E	O	
A			O	L		A	J		N*		A	B		N
C			S	O			E		T		R	A	F	F
K			P	W	T		C		H		E			L
E			O	E			T		O		L			O
T	I	E	R	D			A		S		L			W
I			A				M		I	D	E			I
N			N*		U	V	E		D					N
G			G	U	P		N		E					G
S			I				T		R					
			U				A		I					
			M						T					
									E					

In the August 1979 edition of Word Ways I presented a theoretical Scrabble game in which the participants score 4207 points. In the following contest one player amasses a staggering 4054 points, while his unfortunate opponent manages only 308, giving a combined total of 4362 points for the game. If the last tile (G) is played, it may be used to form the word GOX (in the EDD) for a further 11 points. The moves are:

<u>Score</u>	<u>Letters</u>	<u>Words Formed</u>
66	AEINRTT	tertian (bonus)

64	AEINRTU	iturean, ta, en (bonus)
66	EEINRST	streiten (bonus)
383	AEILQSU	sesquitertial, ei, qu, ur, ie (bonus)
63	AGILNOW	allowing (bonus)
142	EELLORV	overquell, re, el, il (bonus)
5	F	of
124	BEEITWY	weibyeite, bre, yel, eil, it, te, en (bonus)
62	ENOSTU*	tentonise (bonus)
20	OX	to, ox, ox
10	AM	sa, am, em
157	ADEEORV	refavoured, va, ev, ro, bree, yeld (bonus)
18	Y	oxy, ny
24	PU	prefavoured, pu
6	D	pud
99	AAFIIM*	fairmaid, um, da (bonus)
3	IN	id, in
13	AC	ac, af, ca
4	G	ing
1312	DDHJKOO	jackpuddinghood, ki, di (bonus)
7	P	amp
1714	BCHORSZ	benzoxycamphors, uz, ic, allowings (bonus)
4362		

The final board position is given in the diagram below.

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      J  A  C  K  P  U  D  D  I  N  G  H  O  O  D
        F  A  I  R  M  A  I  D*
          E
            O  F
              V  A
                E  V
                  W  R  O
S    E  S  Q  U  I  T  E  R  T  I  A  N  A  L
    I  T  U  R  E  A  N
    B  R  E  E
    Y  E  L  D
    E  I  L
    I  T
    T  E  U  T  O  N  I  S  E
B  E  N  Z  O  X  Y  C  A  M  P  H  O  R  S

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ITUREAN and TEUTONISE (variant of 'teutonize' in Chambers 20th Century Dict.) are usually capitalized according to Webster's Third Edition (Web 3), which implies that on occasions they are not. PREFAVOURED is the British form of 'prefavored', inferred from the verb 'prefavor' in Web 2 (compare refavoured, unfavoured), and FAIRMAID appears in solid form in an 1883 OED quotation. STREITEN is an early spelling of 'straiten' in the OED, AMP is found in Web 3, and EV is a dialectic form of 'of' in the EDD.

All words not already defined in this article can be easily located in either Web 2 or the OED, or inferred from words therein.